

Response to Restriction Requirement
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REMARKS

Claims 4, 7, 8, 11, 12, 14-36 were presented for examination. The Office Action dated November 7, 2003 requires a restriction to claims 11-12, 14-15, 18-31, and 34-36 (Group I) or to claims 4, 7-8, 16-17, and 32-33 (Group II).

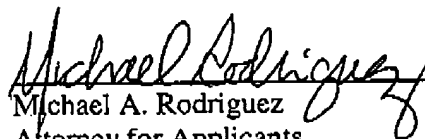
Applicants herein make a provisional election, with traverse, to prosecute the claims of Group I, namely claims 11-12, 14-15, 18-31, and 34-36, and expressly reserve their right to pursue the non-elected claims in a co-pending divisional application.

Notwithstanding the provisional election, Applicants traverse the restriction requirement for at least the following reason. According to section 803 of the MPEP guidelines, "if the search and examination of an entire application can be made without serious burden, the examiner must examine it on the merits, even though it includes claims to independent or distinct inventions." (Emphasis added.) The present restriction requirement has been made after the first action on the merits. This suggests that the search and examination of the entire application was not a serious enough burden before the first action to warrant a restriction. Although Applicants did amend some of the original claims in response to the first action, it cannot be seen how such amendments have made search and examination a serious burden now. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the restriction requirement be withdrawn upon reconsideration.

Respectfully submitted,

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